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AN EPISTLE

Directed to all a Iuſtices of Peace in *England* and *Wales*.

And preſented to the High Court of PARLIAMENT

By *R. B.*

London, Printed for *M. S.* 1641.

TO

THE VVATCHFVLL

Eyes in this our ſtate, the worthy *Iuſtices*, Impriſoners of Malefactors, and Preſervers of peace; that peace is wiſhed which paſſeth all underſtanding, with the zeale of God, in due execution of Iuſtice againſt the enemies of Chriſt, and our Countrey.

WHat furtherance your places of Iuſtice bee to Iudges, ſitting in the ſeate of judgement, is better knowne unto your wiſedome, and learned ſelves, then I can any way immagine or think. Yet I, by my light obſervation, perceive thus much, that without your vigelancy and faithfulneſſe; the Iudges cannot doe, what either their places require, or themſelves deſire to doe, for the good of our countrey. As therefore I have beene bold, in the zeale of God, and cauſe of Religion, humbly to petition them: ſo in like manner, I beſeech you, in your places, to doe this good for Gods Church, to ſearch out theſe walking ſpirits of Antichriſt; I meane the Prieſts and Ieſuites, that they may be conjured downe by the power of the law and ſword, which doe ſo audaciouſly riſe up, with contempt of the word and ſpirituall power of Chriſt. Likewiſe that the ſtatutes be executed upon open Recuſants, who too boldly dare to profeſſe themſelves of the Popiſh Church. And withall, that a circumſpect eye bee had of our Church-Papiſts: ſuch, as for all their open comming to our aſſem-

blies, doe ſufficiently in many particulars, declare themſelves to be in their comming to Church, the very meere ſervants of Men; their couſe at home, and abroad, being duely examined. And that you may ſee, what may truely, and without breach of charity, be thought of theſe, I will be bold with a godly learned friend of mine, to ſet downe unto you, what he concerning theſe Church-Papiſt, openly delivered, as a preface before his Sermon once, at *Pauls* Croſſe, word for word, as neere as may be. His affirmation was this:

Mr. R.B.

Conformity to the Oath of allegiance, and other outward formall ſatisfactions of the State, concurring with a reſolution to continue in Poperie, is farre more pernicious to the State, then open and profeſt Recuſancie.

I ſay it againe (ſaith hee), A fellow which hath taken the oath of allegiance; *firſt*, either by power of ſome Popiſh diſpenſation, which great men eſpecially may eaſily procure, becauſe by their wit, or worth, or high roome, they may be more notoriouſly ſerviceable to the Church of Rome; or *ſecondly*, by proportionable deduction of ſome warrant to their conſciences in that caſe, from that breife of *Pius Quintus* in the Queenes time, mentioned before, which any vnderſtanding Papiſt will eaſily apprehend: or *thirdly*, by the coſoning art of mentall reſervation, of which (perhaps) ſome of their Prieſts & cunninger ſort, eſpecially of the equivocating generation, will bee ready to make advantage of; or *fourthly*, by reaſon of wideneſſe of conſcience, even directly and groſly againſt the corrupt notious and inſtructions ther-of; which is much incident to the more ignorant and inferior rancke of Papiſts, who through baſeneſſe and lowneſſe of ſtate, are exempted from inteligence with the Conſiſtorie of Rome, and acquaintance with the liberty of many popiſh reſolutions in ſuch caſes, and having no grounded and reall

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assurance of salvation in that profession (which is an inseparable miserie to popish herisie), dare not hazard their temporall happinesse, for any hope of future comfort they are ever like to have, or reape by such a miserable religion: I say, a fellow having thus taken the oath of allegiance either by popish dispensation, mentall reservation, or directly and grosly against the checke and contradiction of his popish conscience, is by accident, and by consequent, farr more Pestilentiall to the State then he was before, for such reasons as these:

By this formall outward false hearted conformitie.

First, he diverts and declines the watchfull eye of state-iealosie, from ordinary excubation and vigilancie over his popish villanies and machinations, from a more narrow particular insinuation into his vnder-ground vaults, and timely observation of his engrossing too much gun-power; and so workes a great deale of mischiefe vnobservedly, fearfully vndermines, without any countermine of policie; and concurrers most danderously with the outraged malice of that *man of sinne*, for the wasting of our Church, and dis-strengthening the State, without fence or suspition.

Secondly, he is vnworthily armed with the respect and reputation of a good subiect; and so may more boysterously and with greater bravery, wound and weaken the better side; vexe goodnesse, and good men, more boldly without controlment, and secretly promote Poperie, and hinder proceedings against Papists, even with authority, and some colourable ostentations of safer policie, and florishing pretences of deeper reaches into the misteries of State.

Thirdly, hee may thereby give deeper wounds into the heart of the truth, through the sides of those they call Puritans; and over their heads doe his worst to knocke out the braines of the blessed Gospell of the sonne of God. It is in-

credible, what a world of wrong and mischiefe is wrought vpon the truth which we professe, and true professours thereof, by politicke conformable Papists, vpon the wofull advantage of certaine Ministers inconformitie. If such a fellow spie out a consionable painfull Minister, and finde him obnoxious to the rigour of the law, but in the least point; and that (perhaps) out of a peacefull tenderuesse of conscience, while himselfe is in heart a ranke traitor to the State. O then he plies the advantage with much malice and bitterneſſe, by informations, aggrapations, exasperations fawning concurrence with Ecclesiasticall Courts, untill hee have procured the putting out of that burning & shining lampe, (for he well knowes, when such lights expire, the noysome smuse of Popery is like enough to infect that darkesome place:) and God knowes, all this is done, not for preservation of peace, as he publikely pretends; but for promotion of Popery, which he secretly intends. I woul to God, the reverend Bishops and Fathers of our Church, would wisely thinke of this point, before it be too late. I speake not heere any thing to harden the Separatist, or any truly tumultuous; but to point out a dangerons depth of the *misterie of iniquitie*, which worketh pestilently upon such advantages. I rather pray, that all the blessings of the God of peace, both in this world, and in the world to come, may be heaped upon his head, whosoever hee bee, which doth any way (with holinesse and good conscience) labour to further the peace of our too much distracted Sion.

Fourthly, he that conformes, in outward obedience, to the State, by warrant of Popish dispensation, must labour to recompence the Popes liberality in that kind, with some more remarkable and notorious service to the See of *Rome*. Hee shall finde himselfe, out of a sense of such extraordinary favour from that unholy Father, bound in conscience, and ingaged in congruitie, to be more ready and resolute

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vpon occasion or advantage, upon any desperate adventure and high attempt, for the advancement of his triple infernall crowne.

Fifthly, hee that with wilfull inlargement of conscience, and secret sturdie resolution, takes the oath, will easily and naturally grow revengefully inraged against the righteous Torturers, and conformers of his corrupt and exorbitant conscience.

The conscience receiving a sting, transfuseth the smart into the affections, Which when they feele, they are presently furiously inraged against the occasioners of that their bitter misery. And therefore I am perswaded, such a fellow, so taking the Oath, howsoever he may beare himselfe reservedly, is afterwards transported, with more violent and implacable spite, against the power of that truth, and patrons of that profession, (a sacred zeale where of hath justly brought a racke and vexation upon his misguided conscience) then he was before. And assuredly, if the times should turne, (which God forbid) wee should finde the Church-Papist, and thepoliticke conformable *Pseudo-Catholicke*, more mercilesse & blood-thirsty against us, then the Recusant. Though the best of them, no doubt, at that day, would be as a Brier, and sharper then a thornie hedge; nay even as a woolfe in the evening. For there is no malice neere unto the malice of Popery, save the malice of Hell.

Vpon these grounds also, I have thought, that as the state of a Church-Papist, obstinated in popery, is most damnable in it selfe, (even the popish Doctours themselves being witnesses) as I have proved elsewhere: (see my book of legall repentance, p. 59.) so it is most dangerous to the State.

I speake not this to drive or detaine any Papist from the Church, for I pronounce unto him, out of the word of life

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and truth, hee must flie out of Babylon, into Sion, if ever hee will save his soule: but to let him know, that comming to our congregation, he ought with humility, reverence, and prayer, to submit his understanding to illumination with truth, and his heart to sanctification with grace, both for the procurement and comfort of his owne salvation, and the contentment and safety of the State. Otherwise, as his dangerousnesse to the State is evident and extraordinary: so his owne damnation sleepeth not. For, if popery were truth, as it is not, but the very doctrine of Divels; yet his State is damnable, because he should so, deny Christ before men: if it be false, as indeed it is, and most accursed from heaven, then hee justly perisheth in his heresie.

But, it may be, some will here reply; what can possibly be more required, and exacted from these men, then conformity in outward obedience to the State? what better security, or surer bond, can be thought upon, then an oath, the sacred and soveraigne instrument of all justice and obedience amongst men? what further invention of State, shall be able to stay the fearefull mischiefes, that hang hourely over our heads, from this malicious and murtherous generation?

I answere, none in the world, while they stay amongst us: not the most exquisite and quintessenticall policy of all the wisest States, that lie under the face of the Sunne, can affoord helpe in this case. Idolatry is ever attended with this inseparable curse, that it will plague the kingdome that nourisheth it, and pay it home at length with a witnesse, except some right round, and resolute course be taken in the meane time, for the rooting of it out. And indeed the depthes of the mistery of iniquity are so unfathomable, that they cannot be sounded by the Plummet of any honest and Christian policy, without diving into the bottome of Hell.

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It is a right juſt and holy thing, to give them the oath, and to bring them to the Church. But their violations of oathes, diſpenſations, equivocations, mentall evaſions, corruptions of conſcience, and execrable tranſgreſſions of all lawes, both of God and man, of nations and nature, are ſo infinite and endleſſe; and they ſo mingle their concluſions of State, with the very confuſions of hell; that it is even in proportion as eaſie, to chaine up thoſe damned ſpirits, from tempting men upon earth; as to bridle thoſe blood-thirſty monſters, from undermining and overturning thoſe States; which profeſſe the truth of Chriſt, if power and meanes were anſwerable to their malice and revengefull humours.

K. Iames

It was a royall providence of our gracious Soveraigne, in his firſt ſpeech in the Parliament, to admoniſh the Papiſts, that they would not ſo farre preſume upon his Lenity, as thereupon to thinke it lawfull for them, daily to increaſe their number and ſtrength in this Kingdome: whereby, if not in his time, yet leaſt in time of his poſterity, they might be in hope to erect their religion againe. But it is more then manifeſt, by daily and woefull experience, that their maine end, all their plots, practiſes, ſtrange inſolencies, & the whole ſpheare of a world of Papiſt, that ſwarme amongſt us, hold a ſtrong oppoſition and counter-motion to that gratious counſell and firſt motion of his Majeſtie. A bleſſed and happie thing had it beene, had his Princely pleaſure beene followed in that point. For aſſuredly, were we rid of the Papiſts; and were Idolatry baniſhed out of the Kingdome, as in conſcience, and policie, reaſon, and religion, it ought: the King and his poſterity, by the mercies of God, might ſit upon the throne of England, as faſt as the ſtrong and mighty mountaines upon their ſure foundations. Oh, then would the forraigne mint and forge of popiſh miſchiefe, diſcontinue and expire. Ieſuites, the de-

vills Iourneymen, would take breath, from hammering any more, their helliſh powder-plots in haſt. That malicious and murthering generation would grow diſhartened and unſpirited, for matter of project, and conſpiracie, againſt this noble State. The royall perſon of the King would have none about it, but Angels, and good ſubjects. The concurrent furie of the greateſt enemies in the world, durſt not entertaine a thought of invaſion, or ſtirre a finger againſt the unconquerable glory of our peace. For certainely, the crowne of this kingdome is incircled and ſurrounded with ſuch infinite and endleſſe variety of popiſh inſidiations; and ſtands farre more liable to the furious thirſt of foraigne ambitions, upon this ground principally; becauſe they hope, when time ſerves, to finde amongſt us, a ſide and faction of Papiſts, to ſerve their turne. Cut the thread of this hope; and cut the throat of all plots againſt the Kings perſon; and cruſh the Popes heart, for any probability, or poſſibility of ever re-eſtabliſhing, and erecting his accurſed tyrannie, in this Iland againe.

Now this bleſſed buſineſſe of moſt important and higheſt conſequence, for the pleaſing of God, ſecurity of the State, and preſervation of his Religion, and royall ſeed, that now ſits with incomparable glory upon the Throne, would bee happily furthered.

Firſt, if lawes worth ly provided in ſuch caſes, might have their courſe and current, without oppoſition, diverſion, partiality, interception by falſe friends, or any cunning defraudations and deluſions of the holy intentions thereof.

Secondly, if on our ſide there were but halfe the care and conſcience, for the maintenance of Chriſts truth, and extirpation of the infectious hereſies of the man of ſinne, which are incompatible, both with ſalvation of mens ſoules, and the ſafety of imperiall Crownes: as there is curiouſ-

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neſſe, and cruelty, in Popiſh Kingdomes, for the continuance of Antichriſtianiſme; and, by a bloody inquiſition into the very thoughts of men, (the greateſt ſlavery that ever the ſunne, or the world taſted) for the baniſhing and barring out, even of all poſſibility, (ſo far as in them lies) of reformation, plantation of primative truth, and profeſſion of grace.

Thirdly, and above all, the plantation and protection of a conſcionable learned miniſtery, muſt doe the deed, when all is done, and ſtrike the deadlyeſt and irrevocable blow into the heart of the Pope, if the never-erring Spirit of God have told us the truth, 2 *Theſ.* 2.8. The Lord will conſume the wicked man, with the ſpirit of his mouth. Policy, State, wiſedome, confederations of Chriſtian States, invention and execution of good lawes, the diſarming and diſabling of the Popes vaſſals, and the like are very notable and needfull meanes, glorious attendants, and aſſiſtants unto this holy worke. But the ſword of the Spirit, managed by the hand of a powerfull miniſtery, muſt ſtrike off *Holoferne's* head; and knocke out the braines of that great *Goliah* of Rome, which with intolerable inſolency doth revile the hoſt of the liviug God, and trample upon the neckes of the Lords annointed. The Champions of Chriſt, in the battell of the great day of God Almighty, at Armageddon, may beare themſelves bravely, and triumphantly: but the ſpirit of the mouth of the Lord Jeſus, ſhall carry away the chiefeſt glory of the day, in that conqueſt and confuſion of Antichriſt, and in laying his triple crowne in the duſt.

But in the meane time (untill the Lord put to his helping hand, for ſetting thoſe meanes on foot, with reſolution and conſtancy) it is a matter of prodigious amaſement, to conſider, how mightily impunity of popiſh idolatry provokes the wrath of God againſt us, and in what danger we ſtand;

the State, the Gospell, the royall person of the King, the dayly invaluable hope of the succession of his children, and particular welfare of every loyall subject in the land. For, if any man be so voyd of braine, to doe himselfe and the State that wrong, as to thinke that there are not still new mischiefes on foote, and secret workings against us still, by powder-plots, Parisian Massacres, or some proportionable vilanies: let him thinke there is no divill in hell, no Pope at Rome, no malice in the heart of a Iesuite.

Me thinks, it is an astonishment beyond the comprehensions of nature, reason, religion, policies of State: that such an intollerable generation, so odious both to heaven and earth, with abominable Idolatry; so visibly infamous, both to this and the other world, with many capitall characters of blood; so endlesse and implacable, in their ragefull designments, against the crowned Majesty of the Kings Throne; so prodigious in their plots, that they have cast an inexpiable and everlasting aspersion, upon the innocency of Christian Religion; such furious Assasins and Incendiaries, for murthering of Princes, butchery of people and e, firing of States; so inraged, even like Wolves in the evening, to swallow us up quicke (if the time did serve;) I say, that such, in so orthodoxe a Church, and noble a State, should by allowance, toleration, connivencie, or remissenesse, and paraliticall distemper of the arme of Iustice, or some thing, be suffered to receive encreasement, and multiplication, both in number, and insolency, to the great dishonour of God Almighty, the continuall vexation of Gods people and good Subjects, and the most certaine hazard of the whole State, and the peacefull succession of the Kings posterity. It would never be, but that the Lord in his just indignation, intends, & prepares us for some dreadfull judgement. And I am afraid, Papists will be the men, to execute

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Gods heavie wrath upon us: becauſe they are a principall matter in the meane time, of high offence againſt his Maieſty.

To let paſſe infinite more of very ſpeciall, and materiall ponderations, to this purpoſe; conſider, I pray you, but this one point, with feeling apprehenſions, which is able to inflame the heart of an ingenuous Heathen with extraordinary indignation. I am perſwaded, there was not a Papiſt in this land, whatſoever may be pretended, or proteſted to the contrary, but did heartily rejoyce, at the taking away of that thrice, nay thouſand times noble and bleſſed Prince, P. H. of ſweeteſt memory, for which the heart of every true Subject, did ſhead moſt worthily, even teares of blood. Now, what a rufull caſe is this, that ſuch vipers ſhould be nouriſhed in the bowels and boſome of this Kingdome; the breath, heart, and life whereof, they hartyly wiſh, and would rejoyce to have extinguiſhed? To conclude the whole point for the preſent: it is the generall joynt conſent, and current concluſion of all the Chriſtian orthodox reformed Churches upon the face of Europe; and it is worthyly, and unanſwerably demonſtrated by our graeious Soveraigne, that K. I. the Pope is Antichriſt; and Rome, myſticall Babylon. Some particular men, (out of curioſity and conceit of their owne wit, affectation of ſingularity, doting addiction to popiſh writers, want of further illumination in the point, partiall inclinations towards the divinity of Rome, or the like) may diſſent, without prejudice of a truth, ſo univerſally reſolved upon, by Divines of beſt learning, and ſincereſt judgement. If ſo; then tell me the meaning of ſuch places as theſe, and to whom the ſpirit of God directs the edge and execution thereof.

Reward her even as ſhee hath rewarded you, and give her double, according to her workes: and in the cup that ſhee hath filled you, fill her the double; *Rev.* 18. 6. And

And the ten hornes, which thou ſaweſt upon the beaſt, are they that ſhall hate the whore, and ſhall make her deſolate, and naked, and ſhall eate her fleſh, and burne her with fire, *Revel.* 17.16. This prediction by the judgement of the beſt divines, hath the power, and paſſeth into the nature of a precept, and therefore is charged as a commandement, upon thoſe of whom it is ſpoken.

Theſe, and the like, doe indeed ſtrongly confirme, and make good thoſe three propoſitions of that learned man, and excellent light of *Heildelberge*, in his booke *de iure regum*, pag.6. *& ſequ.* The ſumme whereof may bee contrived into this concluſion; Princes and Magiſtrates, with their ſwords and ſcepters; Preachers, by the word and writings; private men, by Prayer, and all lawfull oppoſition, ought to doe their their beſt and utmoſt, to bring confuſion upon that *man of ſinne*, and his accurſed doctrine. And thus to follow the councell of the bleſſed Spirit, in rooting out the limbes of Antichriſt, and Antichriſtianiſme, is ſo farre from being perſecution, that it is a very glorious ſervice unto the Majeſty of the God of heaven. The neglect whereof, and impunity of Idolatry is able in ſhort time, to ſhake the pillers, and diſtrengthen the ſinewes, to decrowne the head, and ſhorten the raigne of the ſtrongeſt State, and moſt potent Prince in the world Delayes are dangerous; Policy to the contrary is pernicious, and counivency, cruelty; in ſuch places where theſe ſayings have place *bleſſed ſhall he be, that taketh and daſheth her children againſt the ſtones*, Pſal. 137. 9. *All yee that bend the bow, ſhoot at her, ſpare no arrowes: for ſhe hath ſinned againſt the Lord*, Ier. 50. 14. *In as much as ſhe glorified her ſelfe, and lived in pleaſure, ſo much give you to her, torment and ſorrow*, Revel. 18. 7.

In the meane time, vntill the holy Spirits counſell and commandement to this purpoſe, be taken to heart, and throughly

throughly put in execution, I pray the Lord to ſtay their rageful malice, and to turne their popiſh murtherous hearts for whetting any more ſwords, to ſhead the blood of the Lords annoynted: or elſe, to turne the ſharpeſt ſwords from the point, with a cutting edge on both ſides, even up to the very hilts, in their owne hearts blood. And in deſpite of hell and Rome, good Lord, wee pray thee, let King *Charles* flouriſh ſtill, with a crowne of glory on his head, and a ſcepter of triumph in his hand, and ſtill waſh his Princely feet in the blood of his enemies.

Thus much I thought good to Epiſtle at this time, for the diſcharge of my owne conſcience, and the needfull refreſhing your memories, with the apprehenſion of thoſe dreadfull dangers, which howerly hang over our heads, by reaſon of the impunity of Popiſh Idolatry, and the endleſſe inevitable malice and machinations of the Papiſts. We have had provocations, and warnings enough; from this place, from the Parliament houſe: from heaven, by Gods meſſengers; from hell by the powder-plot, from *Ireland* by their heathen Tyranny from Rome, by the roring of their Buls; from *France*, by their maſſacres, and butchery of their Kings: by more mediate, and politicke; by immediate and miraculous revelations, diſcoveries, deliverances: by a blacke and bloody catalogue of moſt hatefull and prodigious conſpiracies, which runne parallell with the golden fine of Queene *Elizabeths* life; by the dayly villanous libels of the ſwaggering runagates of our countrey; baſe and illiterate pamphlets, ſtuft with ribaldrie, and railings, and perſonall ſlanders, impudencies, out-facings, utterly without any paſſage or impreſſions of grace, or gracious ſpirit. A thouſand times, a thouſand wayes; And yet what good have they done, ſith nothing will ſerve the turne? Gods will muſt bee done. For mine owne part, I have delivered mine owne ſoule. If any

will

will not take warning, whom it concernes, his blood be upon his owne head.

But blessed is he, who fore-sees the storme, and hide him selfe in the meane time, vnder the winges of Christ, and shelter of a good conscience. With which Conclusion as hee ended, I also conclude, commending this pithie speech of my so learned afreind, to your wisedome and godly consideration, your selves to Gods holy protection, and all your iust proceedings to his gracious blessing, that you may confidently look for a reward of your well doing in the end of your dayes.

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